

of the Lord Jesus how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Let all, however, rich or poor, try to do their duty. We know the calls that are made upon our people are many, and the present is a season of considerable depression in not a few important interests: but a hearty, earnest, united effort is all that is needed to get this fund out of its difficulties and put it on a proper footing; and such an effort, we trust, will now be made.

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### JOHN KNOX.

Three hundred years ago on the 24th of this month, John Knox, the bravest of the brave, the truest of the true, passed to his rest and reward. The great Reformer was born in 1505 at Haddington. The University of Glasgow claims the honour of being his *alma mater*. He reached the mature age of thirty-eight years before he declared himself a Protestant. No sooner was his change of views made known than his life was in great and frequent peril; for those were troublous, dark and bloody days, when Popery struggled at all hazards to retain its disastrous ascendancy. Knox first comes clearly upon the scene in connection with George Wishart, who, in 1545, fell a victim to the craft and cruelty of Cardinal Beaton. When the profligate Cardinal had been put to death, one short month after the burning of Wishart,—Knox became an inmate of the Castle of St. Andrews. In a short time, however, he and his compatriots were made captives by French invaders, and for two years he was treated as a galley slave, tugging wearily at the oar. For four years—till 1554—after his release from his painful captivity, he lived and laboured with remarkable success in England. So great was his influence that he was appointed one of King Edward's Chaplains, was pressed to accept a bishopric, gave much assistance in forwarding the Reformation, and induced Cranmer to expunge some objectional passages from the Prayer Book and to omit some ceremonies in the services of the English Church. When the "Bloody Mary" ascended the English throne, Knox,

like many other Protestants, sought refuge on the Continent,—chiefly in Switzerland and Frankfort on the Maine. Some of his happiest years were spent in Geneva, as pastor of a church there. He became an ardent disciple of John Calvin, and quite approved of the Genevan discipline.

He made a brief and stirring visit to his dear native land in 1555. The people then felt the spell of his honest eloquence. He spoke the plain truth to all ranks and classes. "He was a large, noble, generous man, with a shrewd perception of actual fact, who found himself face to face with a system of hideous iniquity. He believed himself a prophet with a direct commission from heaven to overthrow it, and his return to Scotland, therefore, became the signal for the renewal of the struggle" (*Froude*.) But he had to return to Geneva once more, and not till 1559 did he permanently return to his beloved Scotland. In 1558, the Popish authorities burnt Walter Milne, as they had burnt Wishart. Franco was now determined to suppress the Reformation in the British Isles, and to annex them to the French Crown. "Francis and Mary" claimed sovereignty of England and Ireland as well as Scotland. The first step in the tragic programme was to quench every spark of Protestant light in Scotland. It was at this critical juncture that Knox came upon the scene, strong in the power of truth and righteousness. He was under sentence of outlawry; but, regardless of this, he preached sermons which were more than thunder-peals—more than trumpet notes, rousing the nation to stand for the truth of God's Word and the purity of Christian worship. The people responded. The altars of Baal were thrown down, the "pestilent prelates" were swept from the high places which they had so foully prostituted. A movement was set on foot which has continued to this day, and which, by God's grace, must continue till the end of time. In 1560, the Reformed faith was recognized by the Scottish Parliament as the religion of the realm, and the Reformed Church was by law established. In the great work of these two years, Knox was the leader, the chief agent, under God. Troublous